

A N A N S W E R

To the pretended REASONS of some

Drapers, Mercers, Haberdashers,
Grocers, and Hofiers, &c.

A G A I N S T

Pedlars, Hawkers, & Petty-Chapmen,

Humbly offered to the Consideration of the

High-Court of Parliament.

Reasons 1. 2. 3. 6. **I**Ts Alleadged, that there are 18000 Pedlars, &c. That they destroy Shop-keepers, spoil Gentlemens Sons, &c. whereby they can't pay their Merchants, Taxes, &c.

Answer. If there be such a Number, they are too many to be destroyed at one Blow, much less are all their Families to be Destroyed. And 'tis not they that destroy Shop-keepers, or disable them, or discourage Gentlemens Sons, but perhaps Industry and Frugality may make a considerable difference, and want thereof may be the cause of such ills.

R. 4. 18. They pay no Duties, Contributions, &c.

Answer. They do pay Customs, Taxes, Parish-Duties, Hearth-Mony, and contributions in their respective Habitations, according to their Estates and Callings.

R. 5. 7. They Multiply; the Profit that 15000 get would Maintain 3750 Families at 40 pounds *per Annum*.

Answer. Its well where Trades multiply and thrive, and they are to be encouraged, rather than those who will not thrive, and it seems not reasonable that 15000 should be undone, to serve the Turns of 3750 who may live without it, if due means be used; and if 3750 could live at 40 l. *per Annum* a piece, (as the other 15000 live with far less) they need not break by such great Numbers as is said by them.

R. 8. 9. They are most of another Nation, and Statutes were made against them by Q. Mary, Q. Eliz. and King James. ~~Many of them (indeed) are of the other Nation of Scotland, which ought not to be complained of being also the same Kings Subjects. There were indeed Statutes made against them in Scotland.~~

and though in one of them the names of Pedlars and Petti-Chapmen are mentioned, yet it has been always thought, that only such Pedlars, &c. are intended as misdemean themselves by Begging, Idleness, or ill courses, and not they who are painful, honest, and inoffensive in their Calling, which both before and after the said Statutes were permitted by Testimonials, to use and exercise the said Calling, and therefore King James of blessed Memory, in the 15th year of his Reign, by Letters Patents under the Great Seal of England, and Proclamation thereupon, reciting, That the Calling of Pedlars and Petti-Chapmen was an Ancient calling, and had in all times been used as well for the benefit and ease of his People, especially those that dwell remote from Market-Towns, who might hereby furnish their Necessities with small Wares and Commodities at their own Doors, and save their pains and travel in going to Markets and Fairs, and attend their Day-labours and Vocations, as also for that the industrious Pedlar and Petti-Chapmen, were of great use for venting and uttering several wares and comodites made in this Kingdom, did give Authority to Justices of Peace neare to the habitations of such Pedlars and Petty-Chapmen to Licence such as were Honest and Industrious to use that calling, which Licenses were transmitted into the High Court of Chancery, and there (by many together) confirmed under the great Seal and by the same Letters pattents, a distinction was made between the said licensed Petty-Chapmen, and others not licensed punishable by the said Statute, there was also a prohibition therein to sell Popish knacks and other things; which said power of Licensing was from that time used until some small time preceeding the late unhappy Troubles; which course again revived, its humbly conceived, may obviate the material Grievances supposed in the said pretended Reasons, That is to say,

R. 10. 17. Inconveniences arising from disguises, and injury to Government, which nevertheless are but suggested fears and suppositions; under pretence of Scotch-Cloath, other goods are sold.

Answer. And they are bought of Gentlemens Sons, Tradesmen, &c.

R. 14. 16. Tradesmen Break in Corporations, &c. 3750 Families every year disfurnished of maintenance, &c.

Answer. How all this can be, or by reason of Pedlars, and the inconsiderable Merchandize they deal in, is humbly conceived unaccountable and incredible, but that too many Break every year is deplorable, but it has been thought that if they consider home, truer Causes may be found out.

R. 15. They sell not cheaper but by false Measures, &c.

Answer. False Measures may be avoided, by measuring by the Good Housewives own Ell or Yard, or may be punished according to Law, and they cannot sell cheaper while they buy of them, and they of whom they buy complain not, nor do these Petty-Chapmen deal in the commodities of most of the Trades mentioned; upon all which, They most humbly offer it to consideration, whether if his most Gracious Majesty recontinuing the said way of his Ancestors, in Licensing and Distinguishing as aforesaid, as (its said) he once proposed to do, it may not be a remedy against the fears and ills suggested, a preservation of so many thousand Families, as must otherwise be utterly ruined at once, and a prevention of other ill consequences, which God forbid.